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Department of State TELEGRAM

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CONFIDENTIAL 759

PAGE 01 SAIGON 09048 090941Z

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 UPW-01 AID-28
RSR-01 /117 W

R 090740Z JUN 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHVWC 5856
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
JJUMJIR/AMCONSUL DANANG 5230
JSDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 9048

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: NGO CONG DUC AFFAIR RAISES DOUBT AS TO FAIRNESS OF ELECTIONS

REF: SAIGON 8785 POL 15-2 Viet S

1. SUMMARY: A RESOLUTION PURPORTEDLY SIGNED BY VARIOUS GROUPS IN VINH BINH PROVINCE AIRED ON GVN SAIGON RADIO AND TV JUNE 6 STRONGLY CONDEMNED DEPUTY NGO CONG DUC FOR ALLEGEDLY PRO-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES; AND STATED HIS SECURITY COULD NOT BE GUARANTEED IF HE RETURNED TO VINH BINH. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 7 IN SAIGON DUC CHARGED PRESIDENT THIEU WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS RECENT ARREST AND CLAIMED THE PROVINCE CHIEF HAD STRONGLY IMPLIED TO DUC THAT HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER. DUC ALSO DECLARED HIS FIRM INTENTION TO RUN FOR THE LOWER HOUSE FROM VINH BINH.

IT APPEARS, IF NOT FROM DUC'S CHARGES, FROM THE GVN RADIO BROADCAST THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS INVOLVED IN THE ACTIONS AGAINST DUC. THE OPPOSITION IS EXPLOITING THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO SUPPORT CHARGES

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC, MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Spalding DATE 1/26/82
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 09048 090941Z

THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL NOT BE FAIR. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EVENING OF JUNE 6 THE GOVERNMENT-OPERATED SAIGON RADIO AND TV BROADCAST A RESOLUTION KAYEXT SENT WASHINGTON BY FBISL SIGNED BY "THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, POLITICAL PARTIES, MASS ORGANIZATIONS, AND TRADE UNIONS" IN VINH BINH PROVINCE. ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF RVN AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS, THE RESOLUTION ACCUY DEPUTY NGO CONG DUC OF "BETRAYING THE FATHERLAND," BEING "A LACKEY OF THE COLONIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS," AND CLAIMED THAT HE "HAS OPENLY PROMOTED THE PEACE WKD CFMALITION MOVEMENT AIMED AT SELLING OUT THE RVN TO THE COMMUNISTS."

3. RESOLUTION GOES ON TO PROTEST "VEHEMENTLY" THE INTERVENTION OF LOWER HOUSE AND SUPREME COURT TO FREE DUC AND THE "COWARDLY ACT" OF THE VINH BINH PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION "WHICH FAILED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE, PUNITIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE UNDERGROUND COMMUNIST NGO CONG DUC AND, ON THE CONTRARY, PROTECTED HIS SECURITY AND SENT A HELICOPTER TO TAKE HIM TO SAIGON." RESOLUTION CALLED ON PRESIDENT, SUPREME COURT AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO "APPROPRIATELY PUNISH" DUC. MOST OMINOUSLY, RESOLUTION ALSO REQUESTED THAT "THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION STRICTLY FORBID THE TRAITOR NGO CONG DUC FROM RETURNING TO AND CARRYING OUT HIS ACTIVITIES IN VINH BINH PROVINCE," AND STATED IF DUC DOES RETURN "THE VINH BINH PEOPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE HIS SECURITY."

4. ACCORDING TO THE SEMI-OFFICIAL VIETNAM PRESS, THE RESOLUTION WAS PRESENTED TO THE PROVINCE CHIEF OF VINH BINH JUNE 5 BY A GROUP OF 3,000 DEMONSTRATORS FROM ALL THE DISTRICTS OF VINH BINH WHO CARRIED BANNERS EXPRESSING THE SAME SENTIMENTS AS THE RESOLUTION.

5. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 6 DUC ACCUSED PRESIDENT THIEU OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ARREST AND ASSERTED THAT THE INCIDENT SHOWS CLEARLY THAT BRUTE FORCE IS BEING USED TO PREPARE FRAUDULENT ELECTION BECAUSE ONLY THROUGH FRAUD CAN THIEU WIN. ASKED ABOUT THE RESOLUTION DESCRIBED ABOVE, DUC ASSERTED THAT HE INTENDS TO RUN IN VINH BINH AND SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORILY ADDED THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF VOTES HE EXPECTS TO RECEIVE WILL DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY WHO HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE.

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6. SEVERAL PARTISANS OF DUC HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM IS TO FORCE DUC TO RUN IN SAIGON (WHERE THE OPPOSTION WILL WIN MOST OF THE SEATS ANYWAY) RATHER THAN IN VINH BINH, AND THE WORDING OF THE RESOLUTION SUPPORTS THIS THEORY. THE THREATS AGAINST DUC AND HIS STATED DETERMINATION TO RETURN TO VINH BINH HAVE NOW SET THE STAGE FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER VIOLENCE AGAINST HIM.

7. COMMENT: CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE JUNE 5 DEMONSTRATION, INCLUDING THE MERE FACT THAT IT WAS ALLOWED TO TAKE PLACE, SHOW THAT THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES UNDOUBTEDLY CONDONED IT AND PROBABLY ORGANIZED IT.
FURTHERMORE, COVERAGE OF THE RESOLUTION IN GVN MEDIA IDENTIFIES THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE ANTI-DUC ACTIVITIES. THE WHOLE AFFAIR TO DATE HAS GIVEN IMPETUS TO CHARGES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS UNFAIRLY ATTEMPTING TO ELIMINATE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES FROM THE COMING ELECTIONS.
BUNKER